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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 001117

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PRM AND NEA/IPA; GENEVA FOR RMA

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TAGS: [AORC PHUM PREF PREL IS SZ GOI EXTERNAL ISRAELI SOCIETY](#)

SUBJECT: MFA OFFICIAL SAYS GOI "ADAMANT" ABOUT GAINING MDA MEMBERSHIP THIS YEAR, BUT FRUSTRATED WITH THE SWISS

Classified By: Pol/C Norman Olsen for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) The GOI is "adamant" about bringing to closure in 2005 the issue of Magen David Adom (MDA) membership in the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, MFA Deputy Director General (A/S-equivalent) for International Organization Affairs Roni Ya'ar told poloff on February 23. He reported that he sent to the Israeli embassy in Washington the day before. at the request of State PRM, the GOI action plan for pursuing this goal. He did not yet have an English-language translation of the plan to share with poloff, but summarized that the basic approach called for building momentum by focusing initial diplomatic efforts on governments likely to be sympathetic. Efforts to court "nay-sayers" could wait until later in the process. The report, he said, outlined country-specific strategies, including for the U.S., where the GOI strategy would include trying to convince NEA to raise MDA with the Swiss Ambassador. The involvement of NEA would, he suggested, underline the U.S. view that MDA membership would make an important contribution to the overall peace process.

2. (C) Ya'ar expressed frustration with the Swiss position on MDA. Whereas ICRC representatives have spoken of the need for only a "qualified majority" of Geneva Convention parties to convene a conference to adopt a Third Additional Protocol that would open the door for MDA membership, Swiss officials have told the GOI that Switzerland would not convene a conference without "consensus" on MDA. "I don't want to bargain with the Swiss," Ya'ar asserted. Their main interest, he charged, is using the MDA issue to leverage for themselves a role in the peace process that "I cannot give them." He noted suggestions from unspecified corners that the GOS should link MDA membership to the convening of a conference on the Fourth Geneva Convention. "I reject this totally," he said, adding that Calmy-Rey, during her visit to Israel earlier this month, had told FM Shalom that she knew that such a linkage was a bad idea.

3. (C) Ya'ar reported that he planned to travel later in the day to Amman, where he was to meet Dr. Mohammed Al-Hadid, the President of the Jordanian Red Crescent Society and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. He characterized Dr. Al-Hadid as a professional with strong ties to MDA and a supporter of MDA membership in the International Movement. He was less sure about the GOJ stand on the MDA membership issue. Consistent with his strategy of deferring efforts to lobby states less sympathetic to Israel on the MDA issue, Ya'ar said he would probably not raise MDA with Jordanian MFA contacts on this trip.

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